

Representative Henry A. Waxman

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H.Res. 294

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and join my colleagues in condemning the ongoing Palestinian terrorist attacks that threaten to derail the renewed effort to bring Israelis and Palestinians back to the peace process.

Since the Aqaba summit, 22 Israeli civilians have been murdered in terrorist attacks even as the Israeli Government has taken measures to release Palestinian prisoners, dismantle settlement outposts, allow Palestinian workers back into Israel and transfer revenue funds to the Palestinian treasury.

This is not a cycle of violence. This is a cycle of terrorism where Hamas and Islamic Jihad bargain for a "ceasefire" so they can buy time to regroup and rearm.

I was shocked, therefore, to hear President Bush condemn Israel's attack on Hamas leader Abdel Aziz Rantisi and Secretary of State Powell speak out against Israel's attempt to arrest other Hamas operatives.

Although the Israelis are willing to take risks for peace, they have every right as a sovereign state to defend their vital interests. The United States, as a nation engaged in the global war on terrorist groups, should stand firmly with Israel on this issue. The same coffers that fund Al Qaeda funnel money and weapons to Hamas and Islamic Jihad, and the same state sponsors of terrorism that arm Hezbollah smuggle mortars, explosives, and weapons into Gaza.

I stand with the President in support of a two state solution that will bring security and stability to the region. The reality is, however, that the future of the Road Map depends on the direction of the Palestinian leadership. Although newly appointed Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmood Abbas faces challenges, he has the ability to move in the direction of peace by shutting off the constant stream of anti-Israel hatred and incitement on Palestinian television and newspapers.

Likewise, it is the responsibility of the Arab states, the European Union, Russia, and the United Nations to support Prime Minister Abbas by joining the United States in isolating Arafat and shutting down the financing of terrorist networks that seek to undermine Palestinian reform.

The Road Map for peace requires all parties involved to maintain a commitment to these principles and to understand that the cessation of terrorism is the first step toward that vision.